

PM Modi Conferred 'Order Of St Andrew Apostle'

Why In News

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** awarded Russia's highest civilian honour, the **Order of Saint Andrew the Apostle**, during his visit to the country. The award for the **PM was announced in 2019**, for "exceptional services in promoting special & privileged strategic partnership between Russia and India and friendly relations between the Russian and Indian peoples."



What Is The Award, And Who Gets It

- The award is given to prominent **government and public figures**, military leaders, and **outstanding representatives** of science, culture, art, and various sectors of the economy for exceptional services to Russia.
- It can also be awarded to **heads of foreign states** for outstanding services to the Russian Federation.



- Its name comes from **Saint Andrew, who is believed** to be one of the apostles or 12 original followers of Jesus. **After Christ's crucifixion**, the apostles are said to have travelled great distances to spread his message.
- **Saint Andrew travelled to Russia**, Greece, and other places in Europe and Asia, and founded the **Church of Constantinople**, which later led to the establishment of the Russian Orthodox Church. More than 90 million people follow the Church in Russia, out of the country's population of around 140 million.



- **Saint Andrew** is regarded as the patron saint of Russia and Scotland. The **'X' symbol on the flag of Scotland** comes from the saint's symbol, called the 'Saltire'. It is believed that he was crucified on a cross of a similar shape.



- **Tsar Peter the Great (1672–1725)** established the **Order of Saint Andrew** in 1698. The **chain of the Order** consists of 17 alternating links, and features a gilded image of the State Emblem of the Russian Federation, a double-headed eagle. It also includes a badge, a star, and a light blue silk moire ribbon. For those recognised for distinction in combat, the badge and star are adorned with swords.



- The **order was abolished in 1918** following the Russian Revolution, which overthrew the Tsarist regime. It was re-established in 1998 by an Executive Order of the President of Russia.

Who Has Received The Honour Earlier

- **Past recipients largely include** influential figures in Russia, such as military engineer and gun designer Mikhail Kalashnikov, author Sergey Mikhalkov, the last leader of the Soviet Union Mikhail Gorbachev, Russian Orthodox Church leader Patriarch Alexy II, and the current head of the Russian Orthodox Church Patriarch Kirill.



- **Foreign leaders who have been honoured** in the past include Chinese President Xi Jinping in 2017, and the former President of Kazakhstan, Nursultan Nazarbayev.

